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ABSTRACT

Schools have been intractable to change and the attainment of goals set by reformers. A major failure has been the inability of reformers to confront this intractability. As a result, each new wave of reform learns nothing from earlier efforts and comes up with recommendations that have failed in the past. Nine chapters explore why reform efforts are not working. Chapter 1, "Confronting Intractability," discusses the inability of reformers to confront the intractability of schools to past efforts at change and why that omission dooms present efforts. Chapter 2, "Conceptualizing the Educational System," takes up the different obstacles that those within the school culture encounter. Chapter 3, "Internal and External Perspectives on the System," concerns the nature of power relationships in schools. Chapter 4, "Altering Power Relationships," takes up the issues surrounding the question of who should be involved in educational decision making. Chapter 5, "Case in Point: Power Relationships in the Classroom," asserts that unless changes in power relationships among different levels of educational personnel are concomitant with altering power relationships in the classroom, the goals of reform will not be realized. Chapter 6, "Obstacles to Change," presents five examples to illustrate why efforts at educational change are rarely successful. Chapter 7, "Reform Efforts: Implementation, Imitation and Replication," takes up the differences between the imitation and replication of presumably successful change efforts and describes why true replication is so rare. Chapter 8, "For Whom Do Schools Exist?" argues that the unreflective acceptance of the belief that schools exist only or primarily for children is one of the root causes of intractability. Chapter 9, "An Overarching Goal for Students," asks and discusses questions about students and what happens in the schools. (Contains 27 references.) (RR)

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